

WEST GERMANY

BUNDESTAG SPY UPROAR CAUSED BY ROMANIAN DEFECTOR

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[Excerpt] The Bundestag was made to return from vacations. The apartment of one Bahr aide and the office of one deputy were searched. Did the deposition by Romanian secret service chief Paceba reveal the top spy? Or is chancellery head Manfred Schueler right in assuming that the spy hunt is nothing but "hot air?"

Egon Bahr could no longer keep silent. Last Tuesday night the SPD executive secretary called personal aide Joachim Broudre-Groeger to his office. There, in private, he disclosed to his confidant that the latter was suspected of espionage and would have to expect "something to break within the next couple of weeks."

The party manager decided on issuing this warning because he felt any further delay would be irresponsible. The reason: On that very Tuesday, strong rumors had obtained widespread currency in Bonn, to the effect that General Ion Paceba, Romanian secret service chief, who had defected to the Americans, had fingered the aide of a senior SPD politician.

Reporters gathered at the press office of the Bonn SPD headquarters and intimated that they suspected Bahr's aide. Tuesday afternoon the BILD sent a teletype to conservative newspapers with advance information of its Wednesday morning headline: "Spies in Bonn: Defector took along a list." Reporters called Broudre-Groeger and asked for his photograph.

Deputy speaker Uwe Karsten Heye hurriedly prepared a resume of rumors and telephone calls for the SPD presidium meeting held the same evening. The documentation went to executive secretary Bahr--by way of his personal aide Broudre-Groeger whose desk stands in Bahr's antechamber.

After Bahr indicated to his aide what he himself had learned from the security authorities on 7 August, Broudre-Groeger disappeared into the night.

Until about 00.02 hours the Bahr assistant drank with friends in Bonn's Alsatian Wine Cellar without mentioning the previous evening's shocking

revelation. Subsequently he went to bed, though not at home in Adenauer Allee 236 but in the apartment of a female friend on the Augustusring.

Wednesday morning he went home to shave. There, in the early morning, came the detectives from the Federal Criminal Agency. They searched his apartment and questioned Broudre-Groeger for 14 hours, obviously with no more than moderate success. Among the most important findings of the spy hunters was the party worker's admission that he had been forewarned by his boss.

The interrogation was not even concluded, nor had further names been made public, when the opposition hinted that it knew more. CSU deputy Walter Althammer who seems to have received some news of the poor result of the Broudre-Groeger examination, asked in a Wednesday afternoon press statement "who might be interested in seeing to it that there is no proof against a suspect."

In answer to a question from the SPIEGEL whether he hoped to derive some benefit from the affair for the Hessen election campaign, CDU/CSU parliamentary caucus chairman Helmut Kohl said: "We do not stand to gain anything because the SPD had 48 hours to sweep everything under the carpet."

Federal Investigators Disregard the Most Elementary Rules of Criminal Inquiries

Yet the suspicion against Broudre-Groeger was only the tip of the iceberg. New and weighty names were added. Springer's WELT reported that "a spy is alleged to sit in Wehner's and Bahr's offices." A secret service expert, on the other hand, claimed: "People should forget" about a Wehner aide as a possible suspect. "That is quite untrue."

Subsequent news was worse. In addition to obviously peripheral personalities such as a department head in the Ministry of Agriculture, a border patrol official and a FDP aide, an important SPD Bundestag deputy was assailed by suspicion. At a special session on Friday the Bundestag unanimously lifted the parliamentary immunity of Uwe Holtz, 34-year old chairman of the development aid committee.

Did all this mean that German counterespionage had at last succeeded in a major coup? Did the investigators get the superspy who, even more dangerous than chancellery spy Guenther Guillaume, is alleged for the longest time to have been ferreting out Bonn secrets? After all, hints had frequently come from the East, which seemed to confirm the suspicions of the security agencies that such a top spy really existed in Bonn.

Or is it that the West Germans are merely chasing shadows? Have they been taken in by the fantastic tales of a pretentious defector from the Balkans?

It already seems certain that the Broudre-Groeger and Holtz cases bear no resemblance whatever to the Alfred Frenzel and Karlfranz Schmidt-Wittmack

cases. Social Democrat Frenzel, arrested in 1960, had supplied explosive material to the CSSR from the Bundestag defense committee; CDU Bundestag member Schmidt-Wittmack, a 1954 defector to the GDR, had also been an agent for the East.

Cabinet members point out that the latest spy hunt is rather more similar to the "Vulcan affair." In April 1953 this was the name given the alleged destruction of the "greatest secret Soviet organization in the West" (according to the then Federal Government). Thirty-eight people were arrested. The snag: In the course of the investigations the material brought to the West by East German defector Gottlob Kraus did not stand up. The Federal Government was compelled to pay the innocent parties more than half a million in damages and compensation for wrongful imprisonment.

Much indicates now that the more than meager tips from the Romanian served as a pretext for the CDU/CSU and the Springer press, QUICK and Loewenthal, to set in motion a major attack on the governing Social Democrats.

Decidedly odd in this spy thriller is the role of the federal prosecutor's office. Why did it wait 6 days to act in the Holtz case? As early as 25 August the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (BfV) had notified Karlsruhe that Pacepa had named only Bundestag deputy, alleging him to be a spy.

Subsequently the federal investigators disregarded the most elementary rules of criminal investigations. Though they acted against Broudre-Groeger on Wednesday morning, they left Holtz alone instead of, early in the week, at least calling for the lifting of his parliamentary immunity. If the SPD deputy really were an Eastern spy, he would have had all the time in the world to efface his tracks or even flee abroad.

Another matter left dangling last week was that of the responsibility for the spectacular Bundestag drama which, even should he prove his innocence, will long haunt deputy Holtz--one of the few potential ministers among the younger men on the government benches.

Federal Prosecutor Felix Kaul, competent for high treason, went on vacation on Monday of last week, leaving the delicate matter to his deputy Helmut Kunz. The head of the agency, Prosecutor General Kurt Rebmann, did not return from his vacation in Spain until last Thursday and immediately tried to calm things down: "Take it easy, take it easy--rifle at the ready."

The Federal Republic's supreme prosecutor, a CDU sympathizer, intimated that, except for the Pacepa allegations, no proof existed, nor were there any additional reasons for suspicion.

The returned prosecutor general's restraint leads to the assumption that there would have been no special Bundestag session, had he been in his office in Karlsruhe. The authorities would probably have waited for the end of the

parliamentary summer break. Given the vagueness of the suspicions, a formal investigation would initially have been unlikely. Considering the paucity of the evidence, an interview with deputy Holtz would have sufficed.

Rebmann seems to have had an inkling that his colleagues overestimated Pacepa's allegation, in particular the Romanian's choice of words in the matter Broudre-Groeger and Holtz. This holds true especially when we consider how much broader is the meaning of the term "agent" in the East than in the West. That which, in an open society, represents a harmless contact with foreign nationals, is deemed by the East a conspiratorial meeting.

As usual SPD majority leader Herbert Wehner hit the nail on the head. Following the 5-minute plenary session last Friday, Wehner said indignantly: "I have an explanation and I will, without ever giving in, tell the German people about it in plain language: Certain secret services tend to make common cause with certain people who favor making the most of it. I oppose this condemnation of people on the basis of CAI reports and highly spiced additions." His threat: "You will live to see the puppets dance."

Wehner seems to recognize the weakness of the accusations now circulating in Bonn against his party friends. Except for Pacepa's allegations (and he is unlikely to be prepared to appear as a witness in a German court), the investigators have so far failed to turn up any real evidence.

Bonn politicians as well as investigators consider the Romanian defector a somewhat impenetrable phenomenon. His tales are therefore accorded only limited credibility.

For many years Pacepa was deputy head of the Romanian espionage apparatus, at times even acting chief, and--according to himself--a confidant of state and party chief Nicolae Ceausescu and therefore had access to top secret information of the other Eastern secret services. Nevertheless he was able to supply no more than scanty data to the Bonn people.

The Cologne BfV twice sent an official to the United States where Pacepa is currently looked after by the CIA in a safe place close to Washington. The expert Cologne investigator, ostensibly a CIA agent, tried in vain to obtain more precise details of the Bonn espionage scene. According to an insider, anything disclosed by Pacepa was as "sparse as it was devoid of substance."

Only very laborious research managed, following the vague suggestions, to trace seven suspects. Pacepa repeatedly sent the investigators searching along tracks which turned to be quite wrong. Nor was he able to supply many details regarding the seven. He was sure of only one thing: Those involved were "real agents," a term he steadily and vociferously repeated in the reported statement. He failed to supply evidence for his assertions.

The only name he could think of was that of Bundestag deputy Uwe Holtz. The general announced tersely: "He is an agent, a most prominent agent. He does everything."

When the officials wished to know what, in fact, the deputy had done for the Romanians, Pacepa merely replied: "He supplied much important information."

The Romanian brusquely rejected the objection that Holtz, in his capacity as chairman of the development aid committee, might well have entertained official relations with the staff of the Romanian Embassy in Cologne. He said somewhat angrily that he was well able to distinguish between overt and covert contacts. There had been normal discussions between Holtz and Constantin Denuta, a member of the embassy's economic department; but there had also been a system of covert contacts.

According to Pacepa's tales the parliamentarian had not received money, but his services had been rewarded by gifts. The files contained a cover name for him. He was "our deputy," Pacepa described the relationship. Concerning Holtz the Romanians had succeeded where they had failed with other deputies ---a regular recruitment for their information service.

The witness failed to supply any evidence for these assertions. His only indication: A public parliamentary question put by the deputy.

On 21 June 1978, in the course of question hour, Holtz in fact inquired from the Federal Government "whether Romania had presented the Federal Republic of Germany with conceptions aiming at Romania independently pursuing the VFW-Fokker 614 program without involving personal or financial risks for the Fokker Corporation." As Pacepa most likely had an inkling that such a routine inquiry could hardly serve as evidence for a spy story, he offered some conspiratorial background.

Holtz, he claimed, had agreed with Denuta that he was going to tell the SPD parliamentary group that the Romanian Ambassador had written him a letter with the background information for his inquiry. Should anyone ask to see the letter, he could---according to the mysterious understanding---say that he had mislaid it. This alleged maneuver is quite nonsensical: Deputies can make any inquiry they want; they need not give any reason.

The Comrades Consider the Pacepa Saga Absurd

The 34-year old deputy, sponsored by majority leader Herbert Wehner as one of the coming men of the SPD, feels himself involved in a "major mess." He calls the accusations preposterous: "Complete nonsense."

In fact the Social Democrat frequently met with Denuta whom he had known for some years. They met in restaurants and sometimes in Holtz' apartment. No gifts, though, says the Social Democrat, except possibly the occasional bouquet for his wife. The restaurant checks were paid sometimes by the Romanian, sometimes by the German---and "I can prove that by my Diners Club card" (Holtz). Nobody, though, can interrogate Denuta: The diplomat disappeared a week ago.

Holtz explains that he had championed cooperation between the Romanians and the VFW-Fokker aircraft plant in order on the one hand "to aid the developing country Romania" and, on the other, to save endangered jobs in the crisis hit firm. The deputy says: "I expect to be cleared without delay."

The constitutional defense agents obtained the name of the second suspect on Pacepa's list only after some research in SPD headquarters. In the United States the Romanian had mentioned a "SPD spokesman who was formerly employed in the economic department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. These data fitted Joachim Broudre-Groeger. This man also, according to Pacepa, entertained covert and overt contacts with members of the Romanian delegation, supplied documents and information, and even arranged a meeting between the Romanian minister of foreign affairs and Egon Bahr. For these services, said the defector in his interrogatory, Bahr's aide had received money also. Unfortunately, Pacepa complained, "he did not give receipts."

Precisely this claim seemed highly suspect to the Cologne constitutional defense experts. They inquired cautiously whether, possibly, Romanian diplomats in Bonn could have pocketed the Western currency allegedly paid to Broudre-Groeger, and whether his compatriots might not have fantasized normal contacts into explosive secret meetings in order to prove their zeal.

The Romanian, familiar with the pecuniary customs of his country, showed understanding for the suspicion. He knew the problems well and was quite aware that exaggeration was frequent in his trade. Nevertheless he insisted: The man from SPD headquarters had been an "agent for years."

Following his interrogation by the criminal police, Broudre-Groeger did not know what to do about the sudden suspicion. Sworn to silence, he confided in a friend only to the extent of saying: "It is truly fantastic."

That is just about the right word. The comrades consider absurd Pacepa's claim that the Romanian minister of foreign affairs needed conspiratorial contacts to obtain a meeting with the SPD executive secretary.

Broudre-Groeger's friends have only one explanation for Pacepa's assertion that he had received money: His name may well have been on a fictitious disbursement list in the Romanian Embassy so as to disguise some Balkan diplomat's speculations.

Another alleged agent was traced by the investigators only after additional research. Initially the Romanian had accused of complicity a section chief in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Yet the only definite statement Pacepa was able to make regarding the date of the man's appointment as section chief did not fit any departmental or section chief in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

When a constitutional defense agent flew to Washington once again to confront Pacepa with the result of the official investigations, the defector came up

with a new version: The section chief might work in the Ministry of Agriculture. At least this man had emphatically championed Bucharest's interests at the time when the delivery of spoilt canned meat threatened to upset German-Romanian trade relations. Pacepa: The man was "helpful."

Investigations in fact showed that the exports of spoilt meat had made for problems in the trade with Bucharest, and that the accused German official had tried to smooth them over. It is by no means impossible, though, that he did so within the scope of his normal duties. Until the end of last week he was unable to comment the Pacepa version: The official, suspecting nothing, was vacationing abroad.

Passed to Karlsruhe After Initial Doubts

As far as the security authorities are concerned, the other alleged spies on Pacepa's list are small fry. A border patrol official, for example, is accused of having supplied a copy of the black list. Romanian experts on aviation safety had initiated this contact on the occasion of a visit to Germany.

The search for Romanian contacts named by Pacepa also scored a success with respect to a minor official in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and an employee of a provincial FDP branch office.

Pacepa was in error when he suggested a lead which involved a department head in the chancellery. This man was alleged to have supplied the copy of an annual report of the BfV. The allegation was proved to be groundless.

In mid-August, after initial reservations, BfV president Richard Meier decided to pass on the material to the Federal Prosecutor General in Karlsruhe. As Meier put it, if a senior official from an Eastern secret service makes serious allegations, these cannot be withheld from the senior prosecutor.

A Bonn cabinet member, upon study of the files, is nevertheless sure that none of the suspects will be convicted: "The evidence is altogether too flimsy."

The social liberals are surprised that Pacepa was able to offer so little definite evidence, although he had extensively questioned his own people at the embassy before defecting in Cologne in early August. Bonn secret service specialists suspect that the defector merely wanted to use the--obviously scant--results of his inquiries to obtain from the CIA the right to a safe life in the United States, well protected from the wrath of his former friends.

Having known Pacepa in the days of his government service, they do not even exclude the possibility that the Romanian is "among those people who spend DM100 for a good meal and then charge their government DM3,000, offering the excuse that the senior informant refused to give a receipt--for security reasons."

The experts from the American CIA, though, have a different opinion of the loquacious Romanian. Pacepa explained to them why he was not too precisely informed about Bonn's internal affairs: In order not to arouse suspicion on his last visit by "asking around too much," he had been very cautious in his inquiries and made only brief notes.

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